

THEOSOPHY IN ACTION



Quarterly Official Organ of The Theosophical Society in Europe—Federation of National Societies

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The True Nature of Man

(Extracts from a Lecture to the European Congress)

by N. SRI RAM

All the great Teachers have spoken of the importance of self-knowledge, which can be understood as a knowledge of ourselves as we are. What H. P. Blavatsky, our great founder, called Soul-Wisdom can be attained only by that means, not by the reading of books. We may read *The Secret Doctrine* and quote from it very freely but we will never grasp the essence of what is said without first understanding ourselves.

The mind which we exercise is formed from previous thinking and reaction. That is why your mind is different from mine. It was one thing in the beginning and is now very different. In the beginning, when the process was started, it was just consciousness in the literal sense, as is the case with a baby. Consciousness, as distinguished from thought, consists in the capacity to receive impressions, and to retain them, thus forming memory. All these impressions and the memory remain within a certain field or enclosure, which might be regarded as constituting the individuality of the particular person. All the changes which take place in the individual consciousness are kept within that field, but some of the changes are neutralized or modified by the further action of the mind. One might call individual man a body of consciousness, which is the field in which knowledge is stored.

Now the contents of this consciousness can be dissolved or shed. They are all dissolved after death by the mechanism of nature, because the basis on which all the impressions and memories rest disintegrates. But the change which takes place after death can be brought about voluntarily in a condition of yoga. When the consciousness is empty of its contents, what remains is like a capsule. We can infer what takes place after death by studying our nature. If by studying ourselves deeply enough by a process of detachment from all experience and all things that cause experience, then we can possibly find out what is the kind of change that is likely to take place after death. The yogis and sages have done that, and what they have accomplished can also be accomplished by ourselves provided we make the necessary effort.

What remains is an entity of pure consciousness, devoid of any objects or ideas, and must be regarded as the potentiality of knowing. It can know what it wants to know, but when it is not engaged in that activity of knowing it remains as a pure potentiality.

The nature of pure consciousness, then, is a mirror which reflects all objects before it, like a film or negative that is passive, receiving impressions all the time.

Thinking is positive action and it reduces the negativity of the consciousness. I may see some object which is extraordinarily beautiful, but if I am revolving certain thoughts in my own head, whether they are about mundane affairs or metaphysical problems, I will fail to notice the beauty of the object before me, or even the object itself.

How deep and clear are the impressions received depends upon the sensitiveness of the individual consciousness, the individual mind and heart, upon how un-

affected, free and pure it is. The consciousness of man extends sufficiently to embrace many objects and it is sensitive at each point in this extension. Just as life is a unique and extraordinary kind of energy, so consciousness in its pure nature is an extraordinary kind of substance. When consciousness is not conscious of something before it it is formless, a potentiality, but face to face with various objects it assumes extension and becomes like a substance.

Now we may think of this substance as having not merely a surface which reflects, but also as having depth, which as subjective feeling or dimension. If one is deeply moved that shows that the depth is in one's own consciousness. We cannot say how deep that response may be, but theoretically it can penetrate to an ultimate, which may be called the ground of our being, or life at the very base.

If there is this dimension of depth in the individual consciousness, can there not be action from that depth? When there is such voluntary action initiated from within, then we experience something very different from the ordinary experiences of life. This action which is wholly free and comes from deep within is surely love and joy, and it is in this that the beauty of the soul consists.

The fact that each one is an individuality constitutes a certain limitation, which is really a specialization. All the Adepts, the Masters, the great spiritual Teachers are Individualities, who live and exist in freedom, but one Adept differs from another, in expression, in thought, in action and so forth. The beauty that He manifests, the influence that radiates from Him is something unique. Each one is incomparable in the sense that He cannot be compared with another.

There is also a field of uniqueness in every human being, but the seed is buried in the hard soil of our nature. Deconditioning means an awakening to the whole process of conditioning. One has become aware of what takes place within oneself, how one becomes attached to this or that, how egotistic one is in one's thinking and ways. One becomes aware of everything that is wrong either in the field of thinking or of action.

In that condition what acts is the pure intelligence and the love that radiates from that unsullied being. The intelligence acts according to circumstances and conditions, but all its action is characterised by love. Both love and perception arise from a state of sensitivity in oneself, and that is the basic or true nature of man.

I think it is important from a practical point of view to understand that man is not what he may appear to be. As he appears, he is often crude, violent, cruel and vulgar, although there may be something agreeable in him which appears now and then. But all this is just an external shell and the true man must necessarily come to light. When you realise this, it profoundly alters your attitude towards people. It gives you not merely hope but a certainty. Then you respect a person for what he is essentially, and that must bring about a different relationship amongst human beings.

Our First Object

BY HUGH SHEARMAN

The Founders and early members of the Theosophical Society had a clear intuition and a compelling urge to move towards certain objectives; but twenty-one years passed before they ceased experimenting with different ways of giving their purpose a final definition in words. The three objects of the Society reached their present form only in 1896. Yet the general principles, which the present objects embody, were accepted in the Society from its earliest years. At every stage in its history the Society has been dedicated to the two ideals of Brotherhood and Truth.

A great and too easily overlooked danger which besets such a dedication is that ideals of this kind come to be formalised in people's minds. They become rhetorical platitudes. They cease to be formative forces which can change people's lives and they become mere "things," counters which can conveniently be used in discourse.

Is there not a tendency for members to treat the Society's first object in that spirit, to "take it as read"? We say, in effect, "Yes, of course, we all try to be brotherly." And indeed, after our fashion, we do. A high proportion of our members are really nice people who are kind and helpful not only to one another but to anybody. But one wonders whether it is sufficiently appreciated that there is no field of human experience in which the "latent" and the "unexplained" lie more deep and rich, waiting to be discovered at every turn, than the field of what we call brotherhood.

In various ways the world at large is taking up the brotherhood idea. Groups, churches, industrial undertakings, whole communities, are amalgamating with one another. But the terms on which such amalgamations are contrived often fall somehow short of what we might feel to be real brotherhood; for the notion of unity is inextricably mixed up in people's minds with the notion of uniformity. Far more than we care to admit, our idea of brotherhood is that other people should become like ourselves, and therefore we think of it as being brought about by ironing out differences. Time has shown that merely to suppress those who differ from us does not bring brotherhood about. In fact the people whom we try to suppress tend to get quite rude about it and start hitting back. So we look now more for compromises and common factors and base our proposed unity on these.

There has latterly been a movement for Christian unity; and, admirable though it is, one cannot help feeling that it has somehow started at the wrong end. The first step in such an enterprise and in terms of brotherhood is surely not to discuss theology or look for a "formula." The first step ought to be a complete mutual acceptance, the recognition that every kind of Christian cult, attitude or procedure has its worth and validity, whether or not we ourselves want to pursue it. What is offered instead is the substitution of a new uniformity, characterised by a fog of evangelical imprecision and the denial of a great part of those qualities and beliefs which make each separate religious body unique. It is a bit like one of those amalgamations of commercial concerns, where the people who do not fit into the combined organisation are dismissed from employment. At the end of the process there remain the un-

accepted and the dissatisfied, even though they may be a minority.

So much is being said and indeed accomplished in the world today about human brotherhood that it has even been said that the Theosophical Society need not nowadays give so much attention to this aspect of its objects. But a world that is yearning for brotherhood is today more than ever in need of a demonstration of what brotherhood really means; and this demonstration the Theosophical Society ought to be giving.

Our late President, Dr. Arundale, summed it up in that slogan which he commended to his fellow members—"Together differently." This does not mean "Together as the result of reasonable compromise" or "Together as the result of an agreed platform." It means just "Together differently."

Some of the considerations which this involves are dealt with in two declarations of the Society's General Council, its international ruling body. One is the resolution of freedom of thought, adopted in 1924. This asserts the three objects of the Society as the sole criterion of effective membership, rejects the binding authority of any teaching or opinion upon members, and asks every member "fearlessly to exercise his own right of liberty of thought and of expression thereof, within the limits of courtesy and consideration for others." The second resolution, in 1950, recorded the fact of the Society's neutrality and dissociation from any other body or organisation. This followed naturally from the earlier resolution on freedom of thought. If we liken the individual member in the Society to a gooseberry in a pie, his freedom of thought would indeed be gravely prejudiced if the pie as a whole were to be placed by others in any kind of hot oven.

Obviously these principles have to be elastic in their application. Neutrality could be merely sterile if it were pursued pedantically and in a sense that restricted the individual. At what point, for example, does a specialised group or cult within the Society begin to compromise the Society's neutrality? Such a problem will be quite different in a relatively small centre—say Bridlington or Dunsfold—from the same problem in London where such a group may be only one among many groups within the Society.

Certain principles, however, do need to be observed. In any published matter, it ought to be made clear that the objects of the Society are the objects of the Society and that the Theosophical Society is not an organisation for propounding, say, the opinions of Madame Blavatsky or the doctrine of reincarnation. When any "teaching" is propounded, its authorship or source ought to be indicated and it ought not to be represented in such a way as to suggest that it comes numinously and anonymously out of some deposit of received doctrine.

This all leads to the point that the Theosophical Society is so constituted as to demand of its members an entirely fresh attitude to brotherhood. It does not provide for a brotherhood of shared or compromised opinion. Indeed it positively rejects this. Instead it invites us to grow in brotherhood through the more and more full acceptance of the otherness

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Extracts from The Closing Address At The Congress

By CLAIRE WYSS

...we have known its ideals must be the condition of its progress and women's fulfilment and general—man's prosperity—in its affairs.

It is said that no seeker goes without a helper, whom he meets, often in some apparently casual way, at the appropriate time. Yet there may be many in whom a slight stimulus could start the search. And there are innumerable young people who are acutely conscious of a spiritual need but have no knowledge of how it can be satisfied. Information could surely be useful here. Apart from personal contact, information is supplied by publicity. Publicity commonly takes the form of lectures and discussions, or the publication of leaflets and books—the latter having a long-term value—or advertisement. There are keen Theosophists who think that sustained advertising, as ordinarily used in business, would bring a great influx of members to the Society.

The commercial method is to present the article you wish to sell so alluringly that potential customers are attracted and feel they would like to have it. This soon leads them to want it. For those with money to spare, this is enough. For others, the next step is to persuade them that what they have come to want is a real need and that they cannot properly do without it. But 'selling' Theosophy is not at all like selling motor cars, refrigerators or beauty preparations. Commercial advertising is designed to appeal to the personality, and this it does all too efficiently and effectively. The things of the spirit pertain to one's inner being, beyond the personality, where advertising techniques can make no impact. It is not possible first to attract, then to create a desire and finally to turn that desire into a need in spiritual matters.

Though man everywhere is in dire need of the ideas and ideals of Theosophy, it is very clear that most people do not personally want it. They are unwilling to examine truths that would cause them to change their way of living. They do not want to be spiritually awakened because it would make life too uncomfortable for them. Also, their materialistic conditioning, together with suspicion of anything unorthodox, produces an instinctive resistance to theosophical doctrine, even though they have formally rejected their orthodoxy. And if the theosophical package could be wrapped up attractively enough to appeal to the personality, then it would be presented under false pretences and more harm than good would ensue. Only organizations that charge large fees and promise occult powers and progress can successfully use commercial advertising methods. That is not the way for Theosophists.

There is, however, also what the business world calls 'prestige advertising.' You merely state what your company supplies or does. The name is kept before the public so that if at any time they want its products they know where to go for them. In some Sections of the Theosophical Society its aims are thus put before the public in posters or in newspapers and magazines as a way of giving information—at a fairly high cost. In recent times prolonged advertising of this kind has been undertaken by a number of religious bodies, and it has been dropped. One can only suppose that it did not give the long-term 'results' that had been hoped for. This must raise the question: Can advertising really further the work

of the methods of work and the results adhered, in whatever way and in whatever sphere they were treated: Everywhere the emphasis was on selflessness, service and love for all beings. This seems to me to be the most important thing we have to give as a society, as groups and as individual members. Various forms and methods may conceal these qualities somewhat, may move them into the background, but they must be the impelling forces in every sphere. Morality as it was proclaimed in earlier times is no longer valid today, but a higher morality should gain in importance. It is up to each one of us to prove by his attitude that he has pledged himself to that higher morality. Efforts to do so are not lacking, and we have some beautiful examples. The morality to which I am referring rests on an inner law. It is the expression of an attitude, a truth, which is nourished by the inner divine streams. The land which we have to cultivate, in the broadest sense of the word, is a fertile one, fertilized by much suffering, blood and horror. Let us do all in our power to ensure it may produce a harvest of joy, peace and happiness for all beings.

To tread the path that leads inward and still remain in the world is one of the most difficult things for a material world to understand. Do we ourselves find it easy to adopt a new way of thinking? Our attempts to change our thought often go in the wrong direction. We try to do so with our will. We think that with the help of the will we shall have our personality better under control. That may be true to a certain extent, but we tend too much to adopt a fighting spirit which can lead to unnatural stiffness. If we wish to develop our inner divine qualities or capacities and use them for the good of others, this task should be undertaken with much love. We can better govern our personality with kindness and a certain benevolence than with an aggressive will which drives it to resist and only strengthens it in an undesirable manner. Since it is part of ourselves, we must understand it and put it carefully in the place where it belongs.

The more effective course seems to be to rise above our shortcomings calmly and to live in an atmosphere of harmony and inner peace. Thus these shortcomings will lose their influence. They will no longer be strengthened through an attention which they do not deserve. We must learn to control ourselves at all levels in order to be able to act impersonally, selflessly. Only then will it be possible for us to attract the attention of our surroundings, to encourage the people around us to make an attempt to turn their thought in a similar direction.

In the lectures, talks, symposia and work groups, we could distinguish a certain line to which all the contributions,

of an organization with spiritual aims?

So we come back to our first point: How do we make Theosophy known and attract people to it? Another razor edge perhaps. This unique teaching of supreme value must be made available so that its ideals may inspire those ripe for them. Therefore publicity must have due consideration. Not a few Theosophists would, however, say that the number of people joining the Theosophical Movement depends far more on the quality of the lives of present members—each one of us—than on anything else. The inner peace and tranquillity that Theosophy can give and can maintain amid the turmoil of the world or the difficulties of personal circumstances is the most potent advertisement there is. Here is a challenge to us. What has been called 'the sweet fragrance of a holy life' acts, and always has acted, as a powerful magnet to draw those in whom spiritual hunger is beginning to be felt. If we could make ourselves such magnets we should soon be astonished at the increase in our membership.

In Perspective

...and in the sphere of our business...
It was a very happy occasion for many members...
during the Congress, and I hope to meet them again...
others during my term of office.

Further reports of the Congress will appear in our next issue.

MADELEINE LESLIE-SMITH

Address At The Congress

By CLAIRE WYSS

the methods of work and the results adhered, in whatever way and in whatever sphere they were treated: Everywhere the emphasis was on selflessness, service and love for all beings. This seems to me to be the most important thing we have to give as a society, as groups and as individual members. Various forms and methods may conceal these qualities somewhat, may move them into the background, but they must be the impelling forces in every sphere. Morality as it was proclaimed in earlier times is no longer valid today, but a higher morality should gain in importance. It is up to each one of us to prove by his attitude that he has pledged himself to that higher morality. Efforts to do so are not lacking, and we have some beautiful examples. The morality to which I am referring rests on an inner law. It is the expression of an attitude, a truth, which is nourished by the inner divine streams. The land which we have to cultivate, in the broadest sense of the word, is a fertile one, fertilized by much suffering, blood and horror. Let us do all in our power to ensure it may produce a harvest of joy, peace and happiness for all beings.

It only remains for me to thank again all those who helped me during my term of office. Let me convey also, the thanks of all of us to the French section for its hospitality and to those French members who did so much to make this Congress a success.

I wish my successor happiness and much success in her work as Chairman. I am sure you will all support her as you did me.

REPORT ON THE 27th CONGRESS

About 400 members from all over Europe gathered together in the beautiful headquarters of the French Section to discuss and discover something more about *Man's Inner Resources*, the keynote of the Congress. We were greatly inspired by the President's main lecture, which is printed on the front page, and by his Opening and Closing remarks, as well as his profound answers to questions. Lectures by other speakers will be published in the next issue.

The outstanding feature of the Congress were the fourteen Work Groups in four languages, which covered a good deal of known ground and brought us up to date in many fields, all of which led us to consider the need for greater service, greater knowledge, and a greater expansion of love and spirituality.

A short notice about the meeting of the Theosophical Order of Service appears on page 3.

At the European Council Meeting, a subsidy of £100 was generously allocated to *Theosophy in Action*, as printing costs have once again been increased. Many kind words were said about this paper, and it appears that in some places it passes through many hands. In such cases, would it be possible to order more than one copy? More donations from those who feel able to give more than the present subscription of 50p would also help to make us fully self-supporting. One hundred more subscribers would make a very great difference.

Mrs. Claire Wyss resigned as Chairman of the Federation, and has been succeeded by Mrs. Madeleine Leslie-Smith. Mrs. Wyss, however, remains as Vice-Chairman. Miss Ilse von Tresckow resigned as Treasurer, and has been succeeded by Mr. Paul Hasler. The members of the new Executive Committee are: Miss M. Anderson, Mr. J. Brandt, Mr. G. Farthing, Mrs. B. Melander, Mrs. H. Sabetay and Mr. V. W. Slater.

Common Market

...and in the sphere of our business...

...it was a very happy occasion for many members...
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The Power Behind the Scenes

Recent revelations about the secret aspects of the foreign policy of the United States have shocked the world. These have accepted at face value the allegations that it was dictated by a desire to benefit other nations or to safeguard the 'free world.' Alas, no nation is framed on such lines. National actions are guided, and with rare exceptions always have been, by self-interest. This has at times been modified by idealistic considerations; indeed this aspect has been emphasized to gain popular support.

The shock comes when in any nation it is discovered that moral reasons are mere pretence and that ruthless use of force has no redeeming feature. For years it has been said that the Pentagon exercised too much influence on foreign affairs and indeed allegations have been made that it kept the President in ignorance of certain matters. There has also been the question whether international finance has not played a big part. One cannot but recall the old German General Staff which constituted itself a permanent body powerfully affecting long-term policy, until it allowed itself to be destroyed by Hitler. Where such an organization exists in a nation, it becomes a non-human military machine, impersonal, purely technological, that runs away with the man.

Are there any other examples of this cold, calculating pitiless power? Few people could answer that question. But we do know that many governments behave inhumanely and utterly without compassion in pursuing their own interests. There have been examples in modern times in South America and Africa and there is the present situation in East Pakistan of what Robert Burns called 'man's inhumanity to man.' There is also the daily record of brutal violence in most communities of men. One needs the long view of evolution that Theosophy gives and then infinite faith in the doctrine of human perfectibility and of man's potential divinity, in order to keep hope bright and confident. Yet it remains true that, in due course, a little leaven leaveth the whole lump.

Control of World Finance

A report on the effects of the 'Euro-dollar Market' was recently presented to the Council of Europe. This is the international money market that has grown up in Europe in the past decade. It has 'facilitated the expansion of world trade and investment and helped to provide flexibility in the international monetary system.' But it has also been used 'for speculative movements of capital.' Thus while the Eurodollar Market has helped expand world trade, the fact remains that a sum of 50,000 million dollars circulating, and circulating rapidly, beyond governmental control, can potentially disrupt the monetary system in any country of the world. There is only one solution: international control. Here is another constant problem for which the solution is One World.

Common Market

At last a note beyond mere material advantage or disadvantage has been struck in the Common Market negotiations.

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The Whole and the Part (II)

BY ADELAIDE GARDNER

(Continued from June issue)

Man on our planet is an individualized expression of life acting through a monadic focus. When he thinks and acts as a separate entity he is liable to identify himself with his means of contact with the world around him. He talks of 'my' feelings, 'my' experience, 'making up my mind,' and feels the larger and the more important for so doing. Actually it is part of the plan that he strut about as an artist, a thinker, an organizer, because this enhances his sense of individuality, until that sense of separateness becomes a pain, a bitter and frustrating condition of smallness, blindness and insecurity, in a world too vast for comprehension. This is the nadir, the goal of the outward path—this is the darkness of Egypt to which the Prince is sent to seek the priceless pearl of universal wisdom in the Gnostic version of the Prodigal Son.

So, having formed a powerful organ of individual expression, the next step is to see that the organ is meaningless unless it is used as an expression of the universal life by which it is imbued, through the action of which it has come into being, and for the purposes of which it is primarily designed. 'Thou hast made us for Thyself and the heart is ever restless till it finds its rest in Thee.'

Here again is the *koan*, the insoluble situation of the hunger within each of us, as individuals, to contact freely, merge again with the universal Essence of which we are composed, even if we cannot 'understand.'

And here the exiled Prince will go astray unless, as in the poem, he listens to the Messengers sent him from the King his father. He is indeed embedded in material forms, weighted down with the 'dark clothing' of his material life. To find himself does not mean that he must examine his rags, but that he must find means to throw them off.

This problem is old, very old. It is not a creation of our times, nor to be met by the pronouncements of modern psychology—that pale reflection of Asian psychological wisdom. Nor can it be solved by following modern spiritual and psychological 'teachers' however enlightened. They can and do point the way. They may indeed act as the King's messengers to arouse the princeling from his immersion in sensuality or in intellectual bewilderment. But there are also classic exercises which have been devised to assist materialized human consciousness to awake and free itself from its limitations.

Recognizing that individual consciousness hangs between the two worlds, the traditional exercises, which are now well known, are in themselves dual. The one half is directed to the resolving of habitual dissonance and disorder in the mechanisms of thought, feeling and action in which human beings are embedded. This practice is termed discipline and is devised to call into activity the will and the creative mentality of the true Self. It involves the deliberate choosing and simplifying of personal activities, and the finding of new ways of genuine Self-expression. This is the field of modern psychotherapy, and is an individual matter, but needs to be directed from the level of creative choice and not of self-concern or self-interest. The experience of honest analysis of personal fixations can be deeply releasing, even if painful. It is part of the training of many old established religious systems. But it can also become so concentrated and self-absorbed that the personality, the centre of the little 'I,' concerned only with its own experience, shrinks in size and lives wholly watching itself, without response to social and spiritual impulses in the larger world around itself.

To counteract this, the other half of the exercises is designed to enlarge individual awareness, especially that of the emotions and the mind, so that these cease to whirl and swing around the personal centre, but are led to reach out to the world of universal, to which we are each fundamentally related, but which we tend habitually to ignore when absorbed in daily life.

The awakening of the Prince in a far country is an awakening of the memory

of his true nature. 'Thou hast made us for Thyself.' This implies that human consciousness has been designed for the precise purpose of registering universal truth, beauty and goodness with clarity and intention. In the individual mind, the larger and universal mind can be mirrored without too great distortion. Through human individuals, when the distortions are minimized, universals can be reflected, and so known by the particularized Self. The individual entity misses the point when it tries to reduce a universal truth to the pea-sized fragment that it can wholly digest within the personal consciousness. Rather—by brooding, by cogitation or meditation upon matters that lie, ultimately, beyond its clear personal comprehension, and at the same time using in its more disciplined life the bits that are assimilable—the human consciousness may gradually be transformed into a true 'likeness' of its Parent; very, very gradually growing in simplicity, in the power to distinguish between temporary and essential values, in the capacity for reverence as well as for Self-direction.

Thus the two-fold exercises, discipline for the outer self, attention "food" for the inner, help bewildered man to perceive objectively that which is transient, and to use as matter—as Not-Self—the whole phenomenal world. But such detachment, lest it become merely negative, is to be balanced by more intense aspiration towards spiritual wisdom. And this, in turn, inevitably leads to deeper acceptance of the fundamental unity, physical, social and ideal, of all that lives.

Now activity shared with others helps the evolution of the spiritual nature of man enormously, and our Theosophical Lodges are an essential part of the Theosophical life for just this reason, as our early literature testifies.¹ Brotherly contacts are a means of expressing spiritual unity, and chosen studies followed together in groups invoke aspects of the common mind, if they are conducted in friendly understanding. This is true also of ritual work, impersonally conducted, and of any common work together.

Again the *koan* appears. Only as the individual works honestly, thoroughly, upon himself to remodel and direct his highly individualized bodies can the Universal take possession of him and remake those bodies to respond to its deeper and wider life. And only as the individual is willing and able to lose his life in the larger measure of universal goodwill and compassion, and melt his mind into the larger pattern of the Great Plan, will his highly individualized mentality and feelings become submissive to the spiritual will.

We are fortunate in the Theosophical movement to have at hand all the ingredients needed for creative understanding of this process—wherever each may find himself today upon the long ladder of evolution. The teachings of occultism explain man's past, and the future is made vivid for us by the revelation of the existence of the Hierarchy, rank on rank, angels and human beings of all types, devoted to cooperation with the One Will. And for our guidance we are told that even they do not wholly understand that Will, although the measure of their understanding is as an ocean to a droplet, in comparison with ours. The present is however the dynamic point in which each individual should seek to comprehend and live in the light of that comprehension.

Finally, an Islamic proverb states that there are as many ways to God as there are breaths in the body of man, and that each must find the way for himself. But

our *koan* again—the individual who rests in the sense of newly discovered individual values is but still-born. The Breath that will make him truly live is universal, and his understanding of this is as important as his self-knowledge.

This then is the provocative contradiction in the ancient Teachings. It concerns the achievement of a strong individuality, and the use of that individualized consciousness as a centre through which to learn something about the mysteries of the

The Place of the T.O.S. in the Theosophical Movement

BY BETTY PAUL

The Theosophical movement began, as we all know, when Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott, with a few others and distinct their particular goals, started the Theosophical Society in New York in 1875. Since then it has spread throughout the civilised world, to various other organisations generally helped to contribute to the general climate of our age.

No one can deny that beginning the leaders of the Society were constantly working in close association with the society, lived, apart from the Theosophical work. H.P.B. sometimes expressed a wish that she might be allowed to do more to alleviate the suffering of the poor. Olcott did tremendous work with his truly remarkable powers of leadership. A fact which is all too little spoken of today, Annie Besant is still better known in the world for what she did to help the poor, for women's rights and for her work for India than as the President of the Theosophical Society. It was because she felt the need for a special medium for those members who wanted to express their understanding of Theosophy in work for others that she founded the Theosophical Order of Service. It became necessary especially after the non-identification rule was made, which is understandable when one considers that the Society, with its wide concept of brotherhood, so impartial as to include both good and evil and presumably all sides of every problem, could not be implicated when members felt they had to take a stand on some particular issue.

Since it was re-formed in Britain in 1954 after a lapse during the second world war, it has operated in many fields, notably in work for refugees, race relations, animal welfare, and in founding the T.O.S. Housing Association. We must not forget, however, that it operates in many different ways in many parts of the world. For instance, in the United States the work is highly thought of and embraces such different fields as work for the comfort of the bereaved and music therapy. In Pakistan wonderful work is done for the blind and for poor lepers, and in providing education where there would be none.

Whilst one realises that all this work is but a drop in the ocean, there is another aspect quite separate from the 'doing of good works.' Members of the T.O.S. have a rather unique view of life and attitude to their fellow beings, human and otherwise, which it is not often possible to share with those of more orthodox beliefs, however altruistic they may be. There is therefore a need for a medium through which they may come together and express them-

spirit and of impersonal natural law. And the teachings also provide a technique through which each individual man can become balanced between the inner and the outer worlds, and learn to link them wisely together.

One of the points to be kept well to the fore in any attempted restatement of Theosophy is just this dual function of human individuality. Each one of us is a superb evolutionary achievement on the part of the Creative Logos. We are each an expression of Himself, but will reach our fulfilment only as the source of our nature is more fully recognized. As a first step on the homeward journey, we have need to learn how to reflect the universal and universal concepts, the larger aspects of universal moral, physical and social law, within the clarified mirror of the individual heart and mind.

It is even possible that the need to train a large number of people to train and silence the personal mind in order that it could reflect the larger universal concepts and the underlying laws of the universe, was one of the reasons for the founding of the Theosophical Society.

1. See *Hymn of the Robe of Silence*, G. R. S. Mead, Extract from the *Gnosis*, Volume X.

2. See particularly *Letters to the Masters of the Wisdom*, Letter 4 etc.—Annie Besant.

(Continued in next column)

Extracts from the Annual Report of the Theosophical Society in Europe 1970/71

The most important event in 1970/71 was the annual meeting of the European Council. It took place in August, 1970, in St. Andrew's, Scotland, during the British Regional Summer School. The following sections, etc., were represented by their General Secretaries or proxies and, in some cases, delegates: England, Sweden, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Scotland, Switzerland, Belgium, Austria, Norway, Denmark, Ireland, Iceland, Wales, Jugoslavia, Northern Ireland and the Young Theosophists.

Meetings of the European Executive Committee and of the British and German-speaking Regional Committee also took place during the Summer School in St. Andrew's. The Executive Committee further met in Paris in February, 1971, and the Pays Latins Regional Committee in August in Aussois. The Congress Committee, consisting of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, the General Secretary of Switzerland and two representatives of the Young Theosophists, also met during the St. Andrew's Summer School. Guest speakers were Mr. James S. Perkins, Vice-President of the Society, and Mrs. Kathrine Perkins, which added to the international atmosphere of the gathering. Mr. and Mrs. G. Barborka were also present. The standard of lectures, work groups, etc., was very high.

Mr. and Mrs. Perkins also lectured at the German Section Summer School in Hustedt, the Scandinavian Summer School in Gammel Praestegard, the Pays Latins Summer School in Aussois and the International Week in Huizen. They spoke to lodges in several towns in Switzerland, Italy and Austria. Since Mr. and Mrs. Perkins lived until recently in Adyar, they brought to our gatherings—as did the President the year before—something of the atmosphere of our international headquarters. At the end of March, 1971, they were obliged to leave India unexpectedly for two years to avoid ruinously high Indian taxation. (They had previously been misinformed about Indian tax regulations). They left for Australia and New Zealand, where they are touring and are active in the work of those sections.

Further Summer Schools were held in 1970 in Finland, Holland and Austria—the latter being the Summer School of the German-speaking Region.

The Young Theosophists chose Jugoslavia for their annual gathering. The Jugoslav members received the young people with open arms and did all they could to help make the camp a success.

I had as usual news of various national Conventions held in different sections: in England, Jugoslavia, Finland, Switzerland, Scotland and other countries. The French Annual Convention will be held during the Congress. In Germany the Convention is triennial, but each year spring and autumn gatherings are held in a beautiful part of the country—on the Lüneburg Heath—and are attended by many members, particularly from the North of Germany. The Convention of the Italian Section was for me this year—as was the Finnish last year—a very happy personal experience. It was held in May in the ancient city of Perugia, in the beautiful Umbrian landscape. Members gathered, as usual, from all over Italy—including Milan, Turin, Rome, Naples, Sicily, etc.—and the whole Convention was held in a very lively and friendly atmosphere. Many very enthusiastic young members were present. Mr. Roberto Hack, after many years as General Secretary, is about to retire from that function at the age of 82. Mr. Hack will certainly be remembered by all with immense affection for his kindly and gentle but firm guidance of the section.

The new Besant Hall at the Centre in Huizen is now completed and is a very beautiful building. Gifts are still welcome, as costs have proved much higher than expected.

Mr. J. Fleischanderl of Austria is in charge of the work of the Theosophical Order of Service in Europe and works conscientiously for that organisation. He issues regular circular letters, giving reports on the work of the Order. Mr. Fleischanderl is rather disappointed at

the lack of reports from the different sections and is always glad to hear from T.O.S. representatives.

There is a new General Secretary in Finland, Miss Sirkka Kivilinna. We thank Mr. Atte Pohjanmaa for his work and wish his successor happy and fruitful activity.

Mrs. Ingrid Fjellander is still responsible for the Round Table in Europe.

This summer Mr. and Mrs. Geoffrey Hodson visited the lodges in Berlin, where they held lectures, and then gave three-week courses, which proved very popular and helpful, in Copenhagen and Huizen.

Mrs. Rukmini Devi Arundale has visited Huizen and England this summer and will take part in the Congress.

Lecturers were exchanged between different sections in Europe—a very useful activity. The Vice-Chairman, Dr. Norbert Lauppert, was guest speaker at the Swiss Convention in Basle, and also visited some groups in Germany. Mr. and Mrs. Leslie-Smith of England toured the Scandinavian sections. Professor C. Schmid of Germany was in Austria and Yugoslavia. Dr. H. Sabetay toured various German lodges. Several lecturers from France visited Geneva.

On the whole, one has the impression that good work is going on everywhere and, what is important, methods of work have been adapted to modern times in that, for example, group work is everywhere preferred to long lectures. International events are being observed by members and seen and understood as far as possible from a theosophical standpoint, with the idea of acting in the right manner if action is called for.

The Chairman presided at the British Regional Summer School in St. Andrews and the German-speaking Regional Summer School in Pichl, Austria. She also visited various lodges in Austria and in Germany and gave lectures. She toured the Swiss lodges and in May attended the Italian Convention in Perugia, mentioned above, where she gave a lecture. She visited Paris twice. Since preparations for the Congress take much time, she was obliged to travel less than usual.

Since this is my last report, I should like to thank most cordially my closest helpers: Dr. Lauppert, the Vice-Chairman, who was always ready with his advice and active help; Miss Mary Anderson, without whose help I probably could not have done the work at all; Mrs. Greta Eedle, to whom we are all indebted for the editing of *Theosophy in Action*, and her helpers, particularly Mr. C. New, who is in charge of mailing the magazine abroad, and Miss E. Deimel, who covers the British Isles. Perhaps I do not need to mention specially that the cooperation with the Treasurer, Miss Ilse von Tresckow, was at all times very harmonious—as it should always be between theosophists. I thank all of you, everywhere in Europe, for your friendship and affection, which have made my term of office a happy one.

When I look back on my activity during these three years, I realise that not much has changed inside the Theosophical Society in Europe. When I was elected I said that I wanted to find new paths, but I do not know whether I have succeeded in doing so. But I have everywhere observed the growing influence of new methods of work within our Society. Discussions are held in an orderly manner, present-day problems are treated in the light of theosophical principles, younger and older members work together in harmony. Apart from the lectures of skilled speakers, short talks are most appreciated, sometimes with discussion following. We shall have samples of short talks at the Congress. These methods are not necessarily absolutely new, but they are being adopted by most of the sections today. What is new is the cooperation between the Young Theosophists and the older members in the coming Congress. I very much hope that this cooperation will give the Congress a special note. At the present time, when the gulf between the generations appears at times to be deepening, this cooperation is extremely important.

May it be successful and may it be infectious.

May the activity of all who share in the work of the Theosophical Society prove a blessing for mankind; mankind which is seeking, perhaps unconsciously, those things that we should be able to give it.

CLAUDE WYSS

NEWS FROM ADYAR

Everyone will receive with regret the news of the death on 3rd May of Miss Katherine Beechey, Recording Secretary of the Society for many years and editor, publisher and originator of the *Adyar News Letter*.

The 23rd session of the School of the Wisdom will take place from 15th November, 1971, to 17th February, 1972, with the usual fortnight's recess separating the two terms in order that students may participate in the 96th International Convention. Dr. I. K. Taimni has once again consented to serve as the Director of Studies.

Mrs. Michele Robine, Mr. Charles Shores and Mr. Manfred Mey have left Adyar, and Madame Françoise Gabour and Miss Lotte Flock have arrived.

An International Information Centre of the Theosophical Order of Service has been formed in the hope and expectation that it will help to integrate and stimulate the work of the Order throughout the world. Cooperation is invited from all those interested in the T.O.S. work, and relevant information may be sent to Mr. Ch. Sankar Rao, T.O.S., International Information Centre, Adyar, Madras 20, India. Requests for information may also be addressed to him.

THE ADYAR LIBRARY AND RESEARCH CENTRE

Since January of this year, the Adyar Library and Research Centre has released a number of publications: Reprints of *The Philosophy of Visishtadvaita*, giving the essential teachings of Ramanujacharya and the *Vedanta Paribhasha*, a concise textbook on the monistic philosophy of Sankaracharya, both of great value, particularly to students of Hindu philosophy; and a revised edition of the translation of the *Laghu Yoga Vasishtha*, a popular work on the Path to Perfection, giving the teachings of Advaita Vedanta in the form of mythological stories. The first part of the classic lexicon of Amara with the South Indian commentaries and with an extensive English introduction is almost ready and will be released shortly.

The air-conditioning equipment is being installed in one of the MSS. rooms and it is hoped that it will soon start functioning. This has been possible due to a generous grant from the Ford Foundation in India—a gesture much appreciated, as this will greatly help in the preservation of the library's valuable MSS. and rare books.

QUEST BOOKS

Obtainable from T.P.H., London
THE MATHEMATICS OF THE COSMIC MIND
L. Gordon Plummer), £4.50.

Taking as a basis the vast system of Theosophy as outlined in *The Secret Doctrine* and applying the complexities of mathematical symbolism, the author leads the student towards his own discovery of some of the deeper realities of existence and of consciousness.

SELF-CULTURE IN THE LIGHT OF OCCULTISM (Dr. I. K. Taimni), £1.10.

A book for aspirants who are earnestly seeking to understand the ancient occult teachings regarding the nature of man and who wish also to discover and tread the path of Self-unfoldment.

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and announced that she will try to take some of the refugee children to Kalakshetra, to educate them as she has educated Tibetan children, if sufficient money is donated. Will those wishing to help this work please send their donations to Mr. J. Fleischanderl, Bank-Giro 87-28669, Creditanstalt-Bankverein, Graz, Austria.

Mr. John Coats stressed the need for going on with this social and humanitarian work in the service of those who suffer.

Fr.srs. 1400.00 were collected.

TO SUBSCRIBERS TO THEOSOPHY IN ACTION

Owing to rises in production and postage costs during the last year, we regret that it is now necessary to charge 50p or U.S.\$1.20 per annum. If you have already paid this year, please ignore this notice. However, many subscriptions are now due. Will you please, therefore, send the amount owing to the agent in your country, or, if there is no agent, or if you are resident in the British Isles, to Theosophy in Action, Business Management, c/o 50 Gloucester Place, London, W.1.

One way in which we are reducing costs is to economise on postage, and receipts can, therefore, only be sent separately if especially requested, and if 2½p is added to the subscription. Airmail postage is more costly now, and if you wish to receive your copy by air, will you please add the necessary amount.

If you should happen to live in a country where it is temporarily impossible to send money abroad, please pay the subscription to your agent, who will hold it until remittances become possible again. The names of the agents are printed below.

We hope in the future to be able to use the donations members so kindly send us for expanding our circulation and for other improvements, and take this opportunity to express our gratitude and appreciation to those who give us this additional support.

GRETA EEDLE, Assistant Editor.

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of other people. Through our accustomed reliance upon so many things that we have more or less fortuitously accumulated as our mental furniture, that otherness of other people at first seems uncomfortably prickly, even quite shattering. But one of the highest functions of the Society is surely to bring about the shattering of that vestigial prudentially self-protective part of our natures which causes us to entertain the entirely illusory notion that we are more united by shared opinion than by shared experience. It is by entering, not just individually but together, into a kind of experience that is beyond opinion that a new quality of truth is born into the world of mankind.

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tions. The British Prime Minister has made the point that an enlarged Economic Community would be the best guarantee of lasting peace, if not in Europe (that could depend on nations outside of Europe), at least among the nations of Europe. When peoples are genuinely working together for a common purpose, they do not fight each other. This fact should put in perspective all the debate about economics. Idealism is not dead. It is very much alive among the young people of the world. Peace in our time and in our children's time ought to be of paramount concern. Much will be decided before our next issue appears.

L.H.S.